

John Blair to George Washington, April 9, 1758, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT BLAIR.

WILLIAMSBURG April ye. 9th. 1758

SIR/

Friday afternoon I received yours of the Second Instant,¹ with a Letter from Governor Denny and the Speech of the Indian King, as also Captain Bullets Letters, and the Proceedings of Officers held at Fort Loudoun, which I laid before the Council next Morning, who concur in the Opinion of the Officers above for the Reason by them given, and for the certain Intelligence that has lately been received of many Murders lately been committed upon our Frontiers by those Western Indians. As to the Supplis you write for, I have sent up above Seven Hundred Pounds in Indian Goods that Mr. Rutherford Purchased here by my Direction and are to be Landed at Falmouth. I had sent Mr. Gist Three Hundred Pounds to Purchase Necessaries for the Indians by Mr. Cromwell besides paying what was then Due, about 500 Pounds, but finding that would not be Sufficient for such Numbers as I hear are coming, I have sent him by Mr. Rutherford 500 Pounds more to Purchase Arms, and Such Things as are not to be got here, and if any more is wanting you will send me Word, for I would not starve the Cause, or have the Indians Disobliged if Possible to avoid it. I am unlookily saiz'd with an Ague and Fevor,² but hope you are in good Health. I have not to add but that I am Sir, your most humble Servt

JOHN BLAIR, P.

P. S. As the Assembly intend to garrison the Forts with Drafts from the Militia I hope you will keep your Out Parties in a readiness to rendezvous on short Notice.

1 To the President: written on the Road to Winchester, April 2, 1758. — “HONBLE SIR,—The Bearer, unfortunately pursuing me instead of continuing on from Fredericksburgh (when he heard that I had passed that place in my way to Alexandria) is the cause of the enclosed being detained so long from your Honor. The business which carried me by Alexandria was partly of a public and partly of a private nature, and I embrace this opportunity of accomplishing both, doubting whether another might offer before I should be obliged to take the field. The enclosed papers contain matters of amost important and interesting nature. The subject is exquisitely handled; for which reason, I shall urge nothing more on it, than to recommend in the most pressing and submissive manner, the necessity of providing for the reception of our Indian friends. The consequence of inviting these people to our assistance,—and their finding us so unprepared when they come, may be destructive of our interests; it being the cause already of much murmuring and discontent. These people are too sensible of their importance to be put off with vague promises. I do not know at whose expense those numerous parties of Indians are to be furnished; whether at the charge of the southern colonies in general or the government in particular? But of this I am fully satisfied that, until such time as the Indian agent or some other person is invested with power and the means also of laying in suitable necessities for them we shall never be in a condition either of fitting them for war or giving them content. For, although much money hath been laid out for goods to present them with, yet those presents have been so injudiciously chosen that when they have been offered to the Indians, they have laughed at and refused them. I have no other motive for representing this matter so freely to your Honor, than as the Assembly are about to sit, these inconveniences, if they should appear such, being fully represented may be redressed. I have now Sir to apologize for my paper &c., The Bearer overtook me on the road within less than a days ride of Winchester; and being unwilling to detain the enclosed put into the first house to dispatch him, which was unprovided with paper, except such as could be taken from a Book; and such is made use of by your Honor's most obedient servant,—G. W.” The foregoing is from Washington's Manuscript Record Book.

2 President Blair is not to be held responsible for this spelling. The letter is in the handwriting of his clerk.